

#### IN THE ABSTRACT:

Please amend the abstract according to the following amended abstract. Numbers to be deleted are enclosed in double brackets.

#### ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A gear case [[15]] forming a lower part of a marine propulsion machine is provided with a gear chamber [[15a]] for housing a bevel gear mechanism, used [[22]] for transmitting power from a drive shaft [[21]] to a propeller shaft [[24]]. The gear chamber [[15a]] is connected to the bottom of a vertical drive shaft receiving bore [[15b]] formed in the gear case to receive a drive shaft. The gear case [[15]] is provided with a vertical shift rod receiving bore [[15d]] parallel to the drive shaft receiving bore [[15b]] and having an open upper end. A connecting hole [[15i]] is formed in the gear case [[15]] to connect respective upper parts of the drive shaft receiving bore [[15b]] and the shift rod receiving bore [[15d]]. A covering member [[80]] covers the upper open upper end of the shift rod receiving bore [[15d]]. A shift rod [[27]] is passed through the covering member [[80]] into the shift rod receiving bore [[15d]]. The covering member [[80]] has upward bulging walls defining pressure-compensating chambers [[82R and 82L]]. Thus, the covering member [[80]] attached to an upper part of the gear case [[15]] and serving as a pressure-compensating structure reduces the number of parts and man-hours necessary for assembling the gear case assembly, and reduces the cost of the gear case assembly.